EVERY OTHER SUNDAY

CORTHELL SC.

A PAPER FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AND THE HOME.

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A FAIRY HOSPITAL.

BY REV. HOWARD N. BROWN.

AT the southern end of the continent of Africa there is an English colony called the Cape of Good Hope. As it is summer in the Southern Hemisphere when it is winter with us, the people of that country celebrate Christmas during the warmest days of the year. When Saint Nicholas comes to such places, of course he has to harness his reindeer team to a wagon; and unless he is provided with a change of clothes also, the poor old fellow must get terribly heated and vexed in his great fur coat. It is not to be supposed that Christmas can pass very smoothly without snow; and perhaps the weather had something to do with the incidents here to be related.

In this new country lived a Scotch farmer, who had left his native country to try if he could not better his fortunes where land and living were less expensive. He might have saved money and grown rich more rapidly, had he not been so fond of his children. To provide them with books and clothes and toys, and the best education that the country afforded, he continually spent more than he could really spare. But he could not bear to think that they were deprived of anything so long as he had the money to spend, and therefore he did not put so much into the bank as he otherwise might have.

When Tom, his oldest boy, had grown into his 'teens, the farmer resolved to send him to England to finish his education. It would cost a great deal, but it would be so much better for Tom that the farmer and his wife both thought they ought to scrimp themselves somewhat to give their boy the best advantages. So Tom was made ready, and the whole family drove down to the seaport town to see him aboard the steamer. While they were staying on a few days after his departure, Jenny (she was Tom's sister, a couple of years younger than he) saw the ladies of the place riding about on beautiful English horses, which completely captivated her fancy. She had a scrubby little pony at home, on whose back she had scoured the country far and wide. But Dick could not jump a fence or a hedge like these strong, long-limbed English horses, and his rough hair was far less handsome than their glossy coat.

Jenny had always been given nearly everything she wanted, and had no hesitation in saying to her mother that she thought she might have one of these horses for a Christmas present. Her mother reminded her that such a horse would cost a large sum of money, and that as her father had already spent so much to get Tom off to school, she doubted whether he could afford such a gift at present. To this Jenny made no reply, but she determined to have the horse nevertheless.

After they returned home, Jenny kept throwing out hints as to what she expected at Christmas. Her father was a good deal troubled by these little speeches, and told her plainly, at length, that he could not then make her so costly a present. At this Jenny chose to fly into a bit of a rage.

"I don't see," she said, "why Tom is of so much more account in the world than I am, and I think that you ought to spend as much for me as for him."

Her father turned away looking rather grieved, for he loved Jenny as much as Tom, and wanted to give her the present upon which she had set her heart. As he said nothing more, Jenny was encouraged to believe that he would gratify her wish, and so she kept silent about it. A few days before Christmas one of the farm hands was sent down to the town, and then she felt certain that the horse was coming.

Now, the fact was that her father had bought for her a very pretty little pony-cart, in order that she might vary the monotony of riding by taking her friends to drive; and it was this cart that the man had been sent to bring home. Christmas morning came, and when Jenny's father told her that he had something for her at the stable, she was perfectly sure what it was. But when she stood beside the handsome cart, and heard her father saying that he was sorry he could not get for her just what she wanted this time, Jenny saw that her dream had vanished, and her heart was filled with angry disappointment.

"I don't want the old cart, I want a horse," she cried passionately. "I think you are just as stingy and mean as you can be, and I won't touch the cart if I live to be a thousand years old. So, there!"

Then of course she ran away to her room and locked herself in to have "a real good cry." When the storm in her mind had somewhat subsided, she stole out of the house and away to the open fields. Her tears had ceased to flow, but she still felt very angry and wretched, and walking on and on she reached at last a great tract of woods. Jenny rather hoped she might get lost, and pictured to herself that then her father would search for her all night long, and would feel sorry enough that he had not granted her request. She was even considering how it would do to pretend to get lost, in case her strength failed before reaching a spot where she did not know the way home, when she spied an opening in a large pile of rocks which seemed a capital place in which to hide herself. Suppose her father were to find her there in the morning, Jenny thought, — would he not be glad enough to give her anything she wanted?

Jenny peered into the hole, which looked so light and cosey that she crept in; then there was room to stand, and she went on a little farther, and still on, till she found herself at the entrance to a fairy cavern of great size and splendor. Fairies are the politest people in the world, and Jenny was received with every mark of attention. She was asked if she would like to be shown over the establishment, and as her response was an eager "Yes, indeed!" a fairy guide was at once assigned her. All her troubles had completely vanished from her thoughts, and for ever and ever so long she was entirely absorbed in the beautiful and wonderful things that were shown to her. She saw so many splendid rooms, and such a multitude of little people at work and at play, that she lost all count of them; and when at last they reached again the cavern from which they had started, Jenny said with a sigh, "Oh, dear, is that all?"

"That is all," replied her guide, "unless perhaps you would like to see the hospital?"

"Hospital?" echoed Jenny. "I did n't know that fairies were ever sick."

"This is not for fairies," answered her guide, "but for the children of earth. We treat them for certain kinds of diseases. You know our fairies roam all about to see what good they can do; and when they find children suffering from any of the troubles which our hospital tries to cure, they bring the spirits of these children down here, leaving their bodies to go about as usual. After a few weeks, we can generally send back their spirits perfectly well, and nobody on earth knows how the cure has been brought about."

Jenny's eyes opened very wide at this; and they opened wider still when the fairy, leading the way through a low gallery, stopped before an open door. Through the door Jenny saw a room whose floor was entirely made of upholstery, like the seat of a large easy chair. On the springs of this floor a boy was jumping up and down, — not as if it were fun, but as if it were very hard work which he was obliged to do, for he looked weary and dejected in the last degree.

"This," said the fairy, "is a case of what we call the grasshopper disease. This boy has always been troubled with a habit of jumping on chairs and sofas, and could not be broken of it. We call his 'the grasshopper complaint,' because it seems to be the spirit of a grasshopper that gets into this boy's legs. We bring him here and give him this floor to jump upon. At first he is perfectly happy; but after a time he begins to get tired of the fun, and sick of himself; but we keep him at it until the jumping fever is entirely worked out of him. This one, you see, is almost cured."

"Are they all like this?" asked Jenny, glancing down the succession of doors that opened from the gallery."

"We use this method of treatment for all cases," said the fairy, "though it is applied in different ways to different diseases."

"Here now," she continued, pausing before another door, "is a case of the mule complaint. Boy kicks; we give him a long row of wooden shins to exercise his toes upon. See how viciously he hits out at them! But finally his toes begin to get pretty sore, and the treatment goes on till you could n't persuade him to kick on any account.

"Here again is a case of the Jackdaw disease. Little girl chatters incessantly; likes to hear herself talk. We arrange these sounding boards to throw her voice back to her own ear, and she talks on and on, till she becomes as tired of the noise as ever her friends were."

So the fairy went on by various rooms describing the troubles of their occupants, till she came to one afflicted with the "spider disease, one of the very worst cases that we have to treat," the fairy said, "and sometimes takes the longest while to cure. This boy was always laying his plans to catch something that he wanted, and you see he behaves here just like a spider."

There were ropes strung about the room in imitation of a spider's web, and in the middle of them sat the boy looking with hungry eyes at a rocking-horse that stood just outside his door. All about him hung most beautiful toys, but he paid no attention to these, and kept himself ready to spring at the rocking-horse, if it should come within his reach. An attendant passing by moved the horse up to the ropes, and down clambered the boy after it. But the attendant drew it away just as the boy was about to clutch it, and he went back sulkily to his former post, where he tried to hide himself among the toys strung about. This was repeated several times, and then the boy was allowed to seize the horse. This he did in so greedy a fashion, and when he had got it to his den he hugged it so close, not attempting to play with it, but muttering and glancing from side to side, as if some one were about to snatch it from him, that Jenny turned away in disgust, as if she had actually seen a horrid great spider.

She had forgotten, for a time, all about her own past life, but now it flashed upon her how she had been trying to get a horse, and how she had

treated her father that very morning. Jenny grew faint at the thought that she herself had been suffering from the "spider disease."

"Does it take long to cure this disease?" she asked in a whisper.

"In some cases a great while," answered the fairy; then, noticing Jenny's white face, she added, "But don't be afraid; it is n't catching."

"No," said Jenny. "But I think I should like to go now, please. Thank you very much for the trouble you have taken." So saying, she sped away like the wind, knocking over a group of fairies as she turned a corner, as if they had been a set of ninepins. Through the big cavern, out of the door, out of the cave, and across the fields she ran, as if her life depended upon her speed.

As she approached the house, Jenny saw her father just entering the stable door. She followed him swiftly, and found him sitting on the shafts of the unlucky pony-cart, looking very sad and perplexed. Jenny at once threw her arms about his neck, and with all the breath she had left thanked him again and again for his beautiful present; then she broke away and danced gayly about the cart, declaring it was the handsomest thing that ever went on wheels. Her father looked on with amazed delight. But when he took his daughter in his arms, and asked her what had made her all at once so bright and gay, she would only answer, "When one has just been cured of the spider disease, one feels very happy." All further questioning she stopped with kisses.

So fearful was Jenny of a return of the disorder, that she saved up every penny of her pocket money, all that year, to send to Tom; and when another Christmas approached, she vowed to her father that if he gave her a horse it would only make her miserable, for she much preferred to ride Dick for a long while to come.

THE NIGHT.

The picture on the outside of this number of Every Other Sunday is an engraving of Correggio's famous painting in the Dresden Gallery. It is called *La Notte*, or The Night, and represents the Babe in the Manger receiving the homage of the shepherds and the angels. In the Apocryphal Gospel of the Infancy we are told that on the night when Jesus was born, Joseph had left Mary in the manger-cave at the inn, and had gone out to find a woman to help them. It was after sunset when he returned with an old Hebrew woman, who was of Jerusalem. And when they both went into the cave, behold it was filled with lights greater than the light of lamps and candles, and greater than the light of the sun itself.

This wonderful light the painter of our picture makes to stream forth from the Christ-child, and to fall in holy radiance upon the Mother as she bends over her babe, and upon the astonished shepherds — the man and the women — as well as upon the group of beautiful angels who are looking down with happy faces upon the lovely scene. The rest of the picture is in the shadow of the night, which only makes the forms that receive the light brighter and fairer by the contrast. But the lesson of the picture is found in that passage in the Gospel where Jesus says of himself, "I am the *Light of the World*." Only let us remember at this Christmas time that we too are told to let *our* light shine before men, that they may see our *good works* and glorify our Father who is in heaven.

THE HOLY FAMILY.

On page 61 of this number of our paper the reader will find a beautiful engraving of the *Holy Family*, from the painting by the German artist Defregger. This is a subject that has been for a great many centuries the favorite theme of Christian art. Even the children, in these days when art is made popular, know something of the lovely Madonna pictures by Raphael and Murillo and other great painters. But our picture of the *Holy Family* is by an artist who is still living, and though it is not so beautiful or so inspiring as some of the paintings by the "grand old Masters," it has yet much of the true Christmas spirit, — the spirit of love and joy in the mother-heart, which makes every Christian home a happy place. The artist's Christ-child does not give us the suggestion of that divine blessing which the birth of Jesus brought to the world, as the great painters of other ages used to represent it in their pictures of the Virgin and the Child. But there is something strong and grand in the head of Joseph, as he ponders those ancient Scriptures of his nation that told of the Messiah that was to be born to redeem the "people Israel."

There is not space enough here in which to give even a short account of the many pictures of the *Holy Family* that are famous as works of art. One of these pictures, however, has such a fitting lesson for us all at this Christmas time that I will try to describe it very briefly for my young readers. It is Holbein's *Burgomaster Madonna* in the Dresden Gallery, and represents Mary with a crown upon her head and a child in her arms standing under a richly wrought canopy and surrounded by the members of a Dutch household. But we ask ourselves as we begin to study the picture, Can this be the Christ-child that Mary holds so tenderly and that has such a sickly look, in strange contrast with the bright healthy babe that stands at her feet? No, we are sure that some change of position has been intentionally made by the artist. He has put the sick child of the family into the place of the Christ-child, that the blessing of Mary-mother may be given to the babe that is weak and pining, as if the infant Jesus were saying those divine words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Whatever we may think of this artist's strange fancy, his picture teaches us the great Christmas lesson, that we are to share our blessings with those who are not as well off as we are. And now if you will read "Bobby's Christmas" on the next page, you will learn what the artist was thinking about when he painted his *Burgomaster Madonna*.

OUR CHRISTMAS NUMBER.

With this number of Every Other Sunday the Editor sends a Christmas greeting to all his readers. Here are pictures and stories and other articles all about Christmas and the good lessons that the Christmas-time teaches us anew every year. We have omitted our columns of Biography and Nature, and condensed the Teachers' Department and the Book Notices, in order to put into this paper something of the spirit of Christmas past and Christmas present. Let us all remember that while it is blessed to receive the gifts of love which are lavished upon us at this glad season, it is yet "more blessed to give than to receive."

Prayer is the key of the morning, and the bolt of the night.

SOME CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS.

BY COUSIN FLORENCE.

In every Christian nation about this time the people are busy preparing for Christmas. I suppose all American boys and girls think (if, indeed, they are able to think at all about it, so full are their heads of wonderful visions of gift-laden trees and Santa Claus) that everywhere, in all parts of the world, the customs at Christmas are the same as with us. But it is not so. The meaning of Christmas is the same everywhere, but many of the customs are not the same. Some of our customs have descended to us from our English ancestry, but most of them may be traced to the northern European nations.

The Christmas-tree, although it belongs especially to the Germans, is used in all the northern nations, Russia, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark; while in the south, in Italy, Spain, and France, the children know nothing about it. All their gifts, according to the popular notion encouraged among children, are brought by an angel, who shows himself at the window and shakes the presents from his lap.

In some parts of Scandinavia the gifts are thrown through the window, the giver, or "Yule Klapp" as he is called, remaining unseen.

In northern Germany, the presents, prepared by the parents, are brought in by "Knecht Ruprecht," clad in high buskins, a white robe, an enormous flaxen wig, and a mask. He is received with great pomp and reverence by the parents, calls for the children, and inquires about their good behavior before he bestows the presents upon them.

But whatever the custom or manner of giving presents at this season, the same grand object is in view, — to make everybody happy. It is this object that draws all Christian nations together at this holy season. Every one is planning to give to somebody else, and all are thinking what they can do to make the day bright and beautiful to those they love.

In Brittany the peasants are so anxious to have everything share in the general rejoicing that the Christ-child is born, that they run about the fields carrying torches on the ends of long poles, that the beasts in their holes and the birds among the trees may have some share in the bright light.

In Norway this spirit of kindness is carried even farther than with us, for there the little birds are remembered. The peasants in the country fasten a sheaf of wheat to their housetops; and so, while the little children are happy inside the house with their toys and books, the little birds outside are rejoicing over their Christmas dinner.

It is this custom that Miss Kate L. Brown refers to in one of her poems in the new Christmas Concert exercise, "The Wonderful Star," which many of our Sunday-schools are using at this time. Let me quote it for you here: —

KINDNESS.

At Christmas tide in Norway land,
Upon the house's eaves fast bound,
A sheaf of wheat is firmly set
For hungry birds that flock around.

The farmer, as he heaps his board
With goodly meats and Christmas cheer,
Does not forget that God's dear birds,
Man's feathered pensioners, are near.

A lesson of the wondrous Star
Breathes sweetly from this simple tale, —
To one who constant kindness shows,
God's tender mercy ne'er shall fail.

Our Letter-Box.

A Merry Christmas, dear Readers! We hope you will enjoy this Christmas number of Every Other Sunday, with its Christmas pictures and Christmas stories. We have also something that is interesting in the Letter Box, in the shape of a poem written by a little girl. Somebody's Aunt Kate sent it, and wrote a little note to you as well. This is what she says: —

Dear Children, — I know a little girl not many years old, who loves flowers dearly, and has many sweet thoughts about them. One day I said to her, "Fanny, if you will write me a poem about a flower, I will write one for you."

Last Sunday she brought me her poem, and I have gained her consent to give it to you, because I think you will like it as I do. I wonder if some other child will not send Mr. Editor a poem about "Pussy Willow," or the "Chickadees."

Aunt Kate.

THE BLUE FRINGED GENTIAN.

The blue fringed gentian
That in the meadow grew,
Looking, oh so faithful,
In its robe of blue!

Happy little gentian,
Hold up thy cup of blue!
God will keep it moistened
With the sparkling dew.

And the golden sunlight
Shining so high up,
Seems to shine its brightest
In the gentian's cup.

Children in the meadow
Pluck the gentian blue,
And with much care take it home
To a mother true.

Fanny H.

ANSWER TO OLD-TESTAMENT CHARADE No. 2.

A-bra-ham.

For Youngest Readers.

BOBBY'S CHRISTMAS.

BY KATE L. BROWN.

BOBBY sat on the stone steps blowing first on one little red fist and then on the other, and kicking his tiny feet together in the vain effort to keep them warm. It was a bright day, with an unclouded sky and brilliant sunshine, but with snow and ice underfoot, and a keen wind sweeping around the corners.

Bobby had found it very uncomfortable in the dark cellar where he lived. There was too little room for Mrs. Flanigan, Mrs. Flanigan's husband, and their six children who cried, fought, and quarrelled all day long. So Bobby had crept out of doors, cold and hungry. To be out such a bitter day even was heaven, compared with the cellar, the six children, and Mrs. Flanigan's broomstick. After wandering up and down for a long time, he sat on the topmost of the stone steps that led to the side-door of a large church. Groups of pretty children walked up the steps past him, and as they opened the door soft dreamy strains of music floated out on the chilly air. At last a sweet-faced little girl came up the steps. She stopped and looked at Bobby with a pitying, perplexed glance.

"How do you do?" Bobby said gravely; "where are you going?"

"I'm going into the church. We are going to practise our songs for Christmas Day," the girl answered.

"What is Christmas Day?" was Bobby's next question.

"Why," said the little girl in great surprise, "don't you know what Christmas is? Don't you have Christmas presents?"

"No, I never had any."

"Well, Christ was born on Christmas Day."

"Who is he? I never heard of him."

"Oh, you poor little boy! Never heard of Christ? Why, he was the best man that ever lived. He loved everybody and was good to everybody."

"What did he do?"

"He gave food to hungry people, and he made the sick well."

"Well, he must have been a good man. I wish I knew him," said Bobby, very earnestly.

"He was good, and this is his house," said the little girl, with sweet reverence.

"Is he alive now?"

"Oh, yes; and Mamma says that he will always live, and we shall live with him in God's home. Good-by, poor boy, I am late. I must go now," and gentle Edith went away with a pain in her good little heart.

Bobby sat thinking. "I wish I could find him," he thought; "perhaps he would let me stay with him. I will ask him."

The child pushed open the door with his numb fingers, and crept into the house that was Christ's. Before him was another door half open, through which he could hear the sweet tones of the organ. He pushed it still wider open. What a beautiful place with its soft rich carpet, and the sunshine pouring through the wonderful red and blue and yellow windows, where such strange lovely pictures were! Up in the gallery were rows of children singing, oh, so sweetly! Bobby's eyes filled with tears that he could not understand.

He stood there for a long time, then turned, saying to himself, "I must find Christ." At the end of the hall he first entered was another door. "Perhaps he lives in there," thought Bobby. He crept down the hall and turned the knob. The door swung open, and Bobby found himself in a pleasant room full of book-cases.

"Well, my little man, what do you want?" said a strong, kind voice, and a gentleman turned about in his chair and held out his hand.

Bobby went across the room, his cheeks red with excitement. Putting both his tiny hands into the great one he said, —

"Are you Christ?"

The gentleman started, and put one arm about the little fellow.

"Why do you ask, my dear?" and the good, kind face looked earnestly into his own.

"I want to find him. The girl said this was his house. She said he loved everybody and was good to everybody. I thought I'd tell him that I was hungry, and perhaps he'd let me stay with him."

"Have you no home?"

"I live with Mrs. Flanigan, but she does n't want me. Mamma's dead. Oh, I hope you are Christ!"

"No, my little one, I am not Christ." The sunny head drooped, and Bobby burst into a storm of sobs.

"Oh! oh! please tell me where to find him. I want him so bad!"

"Dear child, I am one of Christ's friends. He has gone away to live with his Father, who is our Father also. So we, his friends, try to do the work he did." Bobby listened very earnestly as the man drew him up on his knee, and went on telling him about the dear Christ.

Many thoughts were in the pastor's mind. There was a little bed at home the spread of which was never rumpled now, for the dear sunny head that once lay on the pillow lay there no more. There was an empty chair, and there were unused playthings, little dresses hanging in the closet. His darling boy had gone to be with the dear Christ in heaven. And had God sent this wandering lamb of his to fill Harry's place? He determined to pay a visit to Mrs. Flanigan, and make inquiries concerning Bobby.

"He 's no child of mine," said red-faced Mrs. Flanigan to the gentleman who tapped at her cellar-door. "He does n't belong to any one now his mother 's dead. Have him? Yes, and welcome; I 've got six of my own, and glad to be rid of him."

That night a wondering, delighted little Bobby sat in Harry's chair eating his bread and milk, while a lovely lady with happy tears in her eyes kissed him again and again, and bade him say, "Bobby loves Mamma."

It was Christmas Day. The pastor stood before his people, and told them of the Holy Child who was born in Bethlehem's manger so long ago. The children sang their happy songs, and the pastor's heart was very glad; for among them a little innocent face smiled up at him. Bobby had found Christ's house. The wandering lamb had been gathered in, and Harry's place was no longer empty.

Help thyself, and God will help thee. — Herbert.

WHAT SANTA CLAUS COULD NOT GIVE.

BY GRACE D. PATTEN.

IT was a bright Sunday, two weeks before Christmas. Miss Long sat among her Sunday-school scholars, and the babble of the reciting classes had just begun. Some of the boys began to open their Testaments, when she said: "Boys, before we begin the lesson I have something to say to you. I am going to give you all an opportunity to make some one happy."

The scholars crowded closer about her, with inquiring faces, while she told of a poor little boy she had found who had been run over by a heavy team, and would have long weeks of suffering before he could get about again; how he had been accustomed to sell papers to help support his mother, who was poor and a widow; how she had found that they needed many things for mere comfort, which she had been able to get for them with the help of friends. Then she went on to say that Christmas would soon be here, and that she had thought her pupils might like to give something for a present for the little sufferer: he had so many painful days before him, and so little to occupy the time with. She had thought of their buying a book for him, if the boys felt they would like to do this. It would be a beautiful thing to do at this Christmas time; but no one was to contribute unless he really wished to give something.

The eight little faces looked thoughtful; but Benny Paul had his hand in his pocket and out again, before any one could speak. He held a tiny purse, which he opened, and from which he took out a bright quarter. "Here, Miss Long," he said; "Uncle John gave me that to spend for Christmas, but I would rather give it to the little boy."

Then the others followed. Some had only ten cents, some five, some did n't know what they could give till Mamma looked in their "banks;" but all would give something. No, not all. Johnny Paul sat back on the seat and said nothing.

Miss Long turned to him. "Have you anything to give, Johnny?"

"No, Ma'am," said Johnny.

Benny looked astonished, and began, "Why, Johnny," when Johnny gave him a nudge with his elbow, frowning at him, and Benny said no more.

Then the lesson went on, Johnny sitting all the time very still, and not hearing much that Miss Long said, though he was usually the brightest boy in the class. When Sunday-school was over, Miss Long told them that if they would bring the rest of the money to her in the course of the week, she would buy the book and bring it to the school the next Sunday, so they could all see it. Johnny did n't wait to hear any more, but hurried off, while the rest of the boys hung round their teacher, and walked with her as far as they could on the way home.

Now the truth was, Johnny's Uncle John had given him a quarter too, to spend for Christmas; and Johnny had made up his mind, only the day before, to buy a big candy deer he had seen in the confectioner's window. I am afraid I must confess that Johnny liked to eat sweets better than he liked anything else; and that was, to say the least, foolish. He did n't feel very easy when he thought of the poor little boy, but he tried not to think of him at all; and lest he should do so, and be tempted to give his money, he went out Monday morning before school and bought the big candy deer, and asked his mother to put it away for Christmas.

The next Sunday Johnny said his head ached (as it really did with trying not to think), and asked to stay at home from Sunday-school. Benny went, and came home with excited accounts. The book was one that told of a boy's travels; it had a bright cover, and pictures all through it. Miss Long had written the little boy's name in it, — "David Hayes; a Merry Christmas from, —" and then they had all written or printed their own names underneath with Miss Long's stylographic pen, so David would know from whom the book came. And Miss Long had said she would sometime take the boys, one at a time, to see David, when he was well enough. Benny was very much excited, and talked so fast Mamma could hardly understand, and ended by trying to turn a somersault on the nursery floor in his Sunday clothes. He felt very happy; but Johnny did not take much interest in it, and Mamma thought he was not at all well.

Christmas eve soon came. All the children for once were anxious to get off to bed, that Christmas morning might come quicker. Johnny had the big red candy deer put on the mantel over the nursery fireplace, round which all the stockings were hung. How handsome that deer was, with its branching antlers! What a rich color it had! Johnny knew it would taste of strawberry, and if there was anything he liked better than candy, it was strawberries. He lay and looked at it, as it shone when the firelight danced upon the mirror and was reflected upon it. It was the last thing he thought of before he went to sleep.

He had not slept very long, as it seemed to him, when he was wakened by a strange sound. The room seemed cold, and the fire was out in the fireplace. He could see the stars up in the sky, and the red deer on the mantel-piece. He sat up in bed to look over the foot-board, and saw, without surprise, a funny little man in a fur coat and a pointed fur cap. It was Santa Claus. He had seated himself on a low stool that stood by the fireplace, and was looking over the contents of a huge bag. His lips were pursed up, and he whistled to himself all the time. Johnny noticed how much his whistling sounded like the wind in the chimney. He watched him for a moment, and then quietly got out of bed and went and stood behind Santa Claus, to see what he was taking out of the bag. The stockings already began to look full, and there were some packages placed on the floor beneath them. Johnny saw a bright red sled with a reindeer painted on it placed near his own stocking, with some books; and just then Santa Claus brought out a pair of roller-skates which Johnny had been longing for. Each skate Santa Claus rolled up separately, putting one into the leg of the stocking and hanging the other from the nail that held it.

Johnny could not help speaking out. "Sha'n't I be happy! I 've got everything I wanted!"

Santa Claus turned about with a jerk; but when he saw Johnny, he only said, "That depends!" and went on with his work.

Johnny stood still watching him; he was at first so taken up with his own gifts that he did n't notice that Santa Claus kept talking to himself. When he put anything into Benny's or Jennie's stocking, he said, "There, that 'll make their eyes shine!" or, "That will make them happy!" and when he had something for baby Bess, he said, "Dear little one!" or "Darling baby!" but when he found anything for Johnny (and he did find several more things), he sighed so hard that the strings of his fur cap which were tied under his chin fluttered in the breeze which the sighs made; and once he said, "Dear me! dear me!"

"What makes you sigh so hard?" said Johnny.

Santa Claus was busy tying up the big bag. He did n't pay any attention to Johnny till he had finished, and had lifted the bag to his shoulder. Then he stood with one foot over the fender, while he looked at Johnny with his small, bright eyes and said, "I sigh for what I want to give you and can't. I 've filled your stocking to overflowing, but the thing you want most is n't there."

Johnny looked again at his stocking. There was the sled, there were the roller-skates, with several other bundles, and on the mantel-piece stood the red candy deer. He could n't think what it was that he wanted more than all these; and while he was trying to think, everything seemed to be confused; and then he heard Santa Claus whistling, — or was it the wind in the chimney? — and making a great effort to see and to hear, Johnny *really* woke up, and found himself nearly out of bed, with the clothes thrown off. He could see the sky, just as he had fancied he could, and in the darkness the candy deer, seeming to stand up taller than before, and the stockings that bulged out in all sorts of shapes; but Santa Claus was gone. Johnny pulled up the clothes and lay back, trying to think what it was he wanted more than all the things Santa Claus had brought; but before he could find out he was fast asleep again.

Christmas morning dawned bright and clear. Mamma heard the little bare feet pattering over the nursery floor, and the shouts of delight as the stockings were emptied. Johnny found everything he thought he had wanted, — the sled, the roller-skates, the books, a new fur cap, candy, etc. The other children found their wishes equally gratified. Dear little Bess toddled round all day with a cotton-flannel rabbit hugged up in her arms, and Benny had a pair of "really-skates," as he called them. Every one was very happy. Even Johnny felt himself so, as he looked at the great candy deer and his sled and skates. But after breakfast, when he took his books to look at the pictures, he began to think of the little boy who had to lie so many days in bed, and of the book the other boys had sent to him; and somehow, the next time he looked at the candy deer it did n't seem to be so handsome. He had found in his stocking a number of candy figures, — men and horses and fishes, — and there was a whole pound of candy which Uncle John had brought for the children. Still, Johnny thought he would taste the part of the candy that made the base the deer stood on; and he bit off a piece very carefully, expecting to find a pleasant reminder of summer in the strawberry flavor. Disappointment followed; the flavor was n't strawberry at all. The candy was flavored with checkerberry, which Johnny did n't like. He wished he had not bought it. Still, the deer was very handsome, and Johnny had never before had so much candy in one piece. It was quite the largest candy image he had ever seen. He could keep it on the nursery mantel for an ornament, and perhaps sometime, when he did n't have so much else to eat, he should like it. But somehow Johnny did n't feel as happy as he had thought he should. In fact, he had never felt quite easy since that Sunday when Miss Long told them about the poor little boy; and it made him cross to hear Benny talk about him, just as if he were the only boy in the world who had ever got run over!

In the afternoon, little Jennie borrowed the

deer to help make a menagerie; and Baby Bess toddled over to see, and caught her foot in the rug and fell. When she was lifted up and her tears were dried, the deer was found broken, — both antlers gone, and the base broken off, with half of the four legs still attached to it. It could n't be an ornament now, and Johnny did n't care to eat it. It seemed to him that he had never seen twenty-five cents vanish so quickly. Jenny thought that Johnny would be cross, but he was n't. He took the pieces and put them in his upper drawer, and found himself sighing, as he did so, almost as badly as Santa Claus had done. Someway, there did seem to be something he wanted — yes, something he needed — to make him happy. What could it be?

A few days after, as Mamma sat in the library, reading, Johnny stole in quietly and stood by her side. Presently she put down her book, and drawing the little boy closer, said, "What is it, my dear? Is there anything you want?"

Johnny looked down for a moment, in silence. Then he said, "Mamma, I came to ask a favor of you."

"Well?" said Mamma.

"I would like to give away my new book, — the one Cousin Julia sent me, that has so many pictures in it, — if you are willing."

Mamma was surprised, and turned in her chair. "Why, I thought you liked that book better than any other that you have, Johnny! Are you sure you wish to give that one?"

"Yes," said Johnny, "I want to give it away because it *is* the best. I — oh, Mamma, did you know how selfish I was?" and before Mamma could answer, Johnny hurried on to tell her. He was an honest little fellow, and he did not spare himself. He told her all his selfish feelings, as well as the acts they prompted, and he did not forget the dream of Santa Claus. "It all comes from my being such a glutton," he added, with a flushed face; "and if it had n't been for that dream, I might have kept on being one. I have n't been really satisfied with myself since I bought the candy deer; and I think I know now what Santa Claus wanted to give me, but could n't. It was what you call an 'approving conscience,' Mamma."

Mamma listened with a grave face. When he had finished, she said, "You would like to give your book to David Hayes?"

"Yes, Mamma."

"I have no objection, my dear. It seems to me just the thing for you to do, and I am glad you have thought out this matter for yourself. An approving conscience we must all secure, if we would be happy."

"Mamma, I have another favor to ask of you. Will you take the candy deer and keep it? I don't like to see it."

"I will give you a box to put it in, my dear, but I think you had better keep it yourself. It may help you to resist the temptation of a foolish appetite some other time."

"Very well, Mamma."

The next day Johnny took the book to Miss Long and asked her to give it to David. He was too manly not to tell her the whole story, and he asked her not to say who sent the book. He did not feel that he deserved any thanks, for after all he had been drawn to do the generous act, not by any kind impulse, but by that uneasy conscience of his.

Miss Long felt that Johnny was showing true moral courage, and she loved her little scholar better than ever; but she only said, "It shall be as you wish, my dear."

Golden-Text Stories. — No. 7.

A HOME MISSION.

BY KATE L. BROWN.

HAVE you noticed that poor old man who stands on Winter Street trying to sell those hideous bunches of paper flowers?" inquired Constance Keith of her sister Beryl as they sat at their Kensington, one day.

"Yes, indeed," replied Beryl, "and it always makes me real blue. How forlorn he looks!"

"I always feel badly too," said Constance. "Have you noticed how feeble he is, and what feverish sunken cheeks he has?"

"I guess I have! Do you suppose any one ever buys those dreadful flowers?"

"I never saw any one; it 's enough to make you shiver to think of having a bunch on your mantle, ugh!" and Constance gave a dainty little grimace of disgust. "It seems as if we ought to do something for him. I have thought of it ever since Miss Allen talked to us about home mission-work. We have such a comfortable time of it, we really ought to do something."

"I think so too," replied Beryl. "Oh, Connie, suppose we take him for a subject! It would be real romantic, different from anything else we 've ever thought of."

"Miss Allen says that mission work begins at home," remarked Constance thoughtfully, as she threaded her needle with pale blue silk. "I suppose Don needs looking after as much as any one."

"What a boy he is!" said Beryl, "he reminds me of a young bear."

"Yes, Beryl," remarked Constance solemnly, "I think it 's our duty to reform our brother Donald."

"What can we do? What will he *let* us do?" inquired Beryl anxiously, a shade of care on her round little face.

"I shall go to him and have a nice friendly little talk," replied Constance. "I shall say to him, 'Donald dear, we want to help you. You are not as much of a gentleman as you should be. Now, won't you wear your light boots in the house, and comb your hair, and not stamp or whistle, or bring your dog into the drawing-room?' I 'll talk real kindly to him, and see if it won't influence him. Really, I feel ashamed of neglecting my own brother and going outside for work."

"He 'll get mad," said Beryl, doubtfully.

"I shall be so kind he can't," remarked Constance with dignity. "But we won't forget our old man, Berry."

"What can we do for him?"

"We can go and talk to him, and find out all about his circumstances. And then, if everything is all right, we can give him some money and food. Perhaps he will like to go to church; and very likely the Ladies' Circle will get interested in him."

"When will you do this?" inquired Beryl.

"We can't to-morrow, because it is dancing school afternoon; and Thursday we go to that sleigh-ride, and Friday the Club meets. We 'll go Saturday."

The girls discussed the subject awhile longer, then wandered off into other topics.

The room in which they worked was a very pretty sitting-room leading from the library, and only separated from it by an archway, over which hung heavy plush curtains.

In the library, curled up in a sleepy-hollow chair, behind the tall Indian screen, was a small boy ten or eleven years of age, who had been an interested hearer of all the virtuous resolves planned out in the sitting-room.

"Those old girls, I 'd like to see 'em order me 'round," muttered the youth to himself. "They may just let me alone! I won't be reformed by *them!*" and if Beryl and Constance could have seen the unutterable expression of disgust on the chubby face, and the scornful upturning of the pug nose, they would have been more than doubtful of the success of their plans.

Donald had listened in the most deliberate and cold-blooded way to his sisters' conversation until it turned to other subjects. Then this bad boy crept out of the room with an idea in his obstinate curly pate.

That evening, Constance, fired with virtuous resolves, marched to the corner where Don sat with Tatters his dog, and opened what Uncle Dick would have called a "Holy War" upon him.

Don heard her through, then rising and bowing profoundly remarked in tones of cutting sarcasm, "Thank you, my dear sister, for your great interest in your bad brother. But I happen to know *you*, and I guess you had better reform yourself before you undertake my case."

"You are the rudest boy I ever saw," cried Constance, her cheeks ablaze with anger and mortification.

"Thank you, my dear," remarked Don, sweetly, "you 're getting mad. Suppose you learn to manage your own temper before you undertake my case."

"You are the worst, most hateful boy I know," cried Constance, sweeping out of the room in high wrath.

"How did I succeed?" said Constance as she rejoined Beryl in their own room. "Horridly! I think Don is the worst boy I know. If he were only like Alick Gray."

"Yes, Alick Gray is very pleasant and nice mannered," responded Beryl, slowly, "but he is not always truthful, and I never knew Don to tell a lie."

"I 'll just let Don alone after this! The idea of his talking so to me when I was just as pleasant as I could be, and tried to help him," said Constance, resentfully.

"Don't you think it was a mistake to speak to him?" asked Beryl, timidly; "boys don't like to be lectured. We don't either."

"I know it," cried Constance, with a burst of candor; "and now I 've got mad and lost my temper, of course I can never have any influence over him after this." And Constance shed some tears of genuine regret and longing.

The time passed swiftly with lessons and pleasures. Somehow the plan for befriending the old man got put off and put off. The girls intended to carry it out, but something was always happening to prevent, and they never thought of omitting any of their frolics for the proposed act of benevolence.

One day Beryl came home in a state of great excitement. "What do you think, Constance?" she said. "I saw our old man to-day, and he is n't selling paper flowers any more. He has real flowers, pinks and violets. And a whole crowd of Grammar-school boys were buying. And what do you think? He had a comforter around his neck that looked just like Don's, — the one Aunt Lou gave him. Now what does it mean? I did n't see Don, but all his chums were there."

"I can't imagine," said Constance slowly; "how could Don tell about it, how could he know?"

"We 'll find out," suggested Beryl.

"Where's your scarf, Don?" inquired Beryl, slyly at the supper-table.

"All right I guess," replied the young man coolly, without the slightest change of countenance.

The next day Mamma said, "Connie, run to Don's bureau and bring me his extra flannels." Constance obeyed, and began to search in the wild whirlpool of stockings, brushes, dog-collars, etc., that were the marked characteristics of Don's bureau drawers.

"Where *are* those flannels? I 'll look in here," said Constance, opening a drawer that Don usually kept locked. To her surprise the lock yielded readily. She started back in amazement, for the drawer was packed full of hideous magenta paper-flowers, — a kind which she had never seen save in the hands of the poor old man on Winter Street. Constance counted three dozen bunches, then shut the drawer with an odd expression.

"Just keep still, my dear; I 'll find out about it," said Mamma, after a hurried consultation.

The opportunity came sooner than they expected. The next day Don had a sick headache, and retired to the lounge in Mamma's room for nursing and petting. That night when the sisters were undressing, Mamma came in for a quiet little chat over the fire.

"He told me all," she said, with a little amused laugh, "the dear, funny fellow. He bought every bunch of flowers the old man had, and paid him ten cents a bunch. Then he took him to Wälther's, and made an arrangement by which he could get flowers to sell; and Wälther pays him so much for every bunch he sells. He also made his mates patronize the old man, and they carry the bouquets to the Children's Hospital."

"What will Don say because you have told us?" said Beryl.

"I told him I should tell you, and of course he rebelled. So you must not approach him on the subject."

Constance sat still, looking into the fire with very red cheeks.

"Well, my dear, what are you thinking about," said Mamma, kissing the top of the blond head. Constance looked up, a tear twinkling in her eye.

"I guess Don's the home missionary after all," she said half laughing. And though no more was said, Mamma knew that the lesson had not been in vain.

Teachers' Department.

NOTES ON SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS ON THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS.

LESSON CALENDAR. — No. 13. Against Profanity. No. 14. Almsgiving.

THE story of Peter's swearing and cursing when he denied his Master (Mark xiv. 66-72) furnishes one of the best illustrations of the *moral weakness* of the man who indulges in profane speech. The teacher may draw other illustrations from his or her own knowledge of the profanity of men and boys. The force of habit is strikingly shown by the power which the use of oaths and expletives gradually gains over one's common speech. The irreligiousness of profanity should be pointed out, as also the way in which the things which should always be associated with worship and aspiration lose their sanctity, as well as their tenderness, by the coarse handling of sacred themes. Irreverence destroys love. As Miss Frances Power Cobbe well says: "To detract from reverence toward God is to cut from under us the sole support of divine love. Man could not pay, nor God receive, the smallest bud of love growing on any other stem."

Profanity with children is often associated with concealment and hypocrisy. The boy who utters glibly the loud oath before his mates, to show how smart he is, will speak only smooth words before his parents, kissing his mother with lips soiled by profane utterances, or joining in the prayer that God will bless his dear ones, when in the play-ground or in the street he has asked God to curse this one or that one of his companions.

The appeal to a child's sense of honor and self-respect will often suffice to break up the habit of profanity. But something should be added on the moral beauty of simple and unexaggerated speech, — the conversation that is devoid of slang and coarseness, as well as of the oath and the curse.

Almsgiving. Reference is made in the *Teaching* to Mr. Dole's thoughtful discussion of this topic in the "Citizen and Neighbor," chap. xv. The ninth chapter of the same manual, in which the grievances of the poor and the causes of poverty are considered, might also be read with profit. Chapter xvii. of "Ecce Homo" gives an admirable exposition of the Christian Law of Philanthropy. The author shows how this law, if carried out to-day in its spirit rather than its letter, would lead men to prevent pauperism, to anticipate and avert the miseries that are attendant upon poverty. The lesson of the evil of indiscriminate almsgiving has been thoroughly taught in recent years. Tramps and professional beggars find their former occupation gone. In our large towns and cities, bureaus of charity and relief associations investigate the claims of all who solicit alms, and save the gifts of the charitable from being wasted or misdirected. But after social science and organized philanthropy have done their utmost to remove the causes of poverty, and to direct the alms of the benevolent to those who *deserve* to be assisted, there will still remain the old obligation of constant and loving helpfulness on the part of every follower of Christ. Personal help is the method, as well as the spirit, of Christian charity, and no better model has been given us than that of the Good Samaritan in the Gospel parable. (The teacher might read to the class § 5 of Lesson II. of this series, in which the method of the Good Samaritan's helpfulness is explained.) In the "Christian Register" of Nov. 19, 1885, Rev. S. R. Calthrop sets forth very clearly and convincingly the duty of personal help to the poor, — a duty that "scientific charity" in no wise lessens or undervalues.

Our Book Table.

NOTE. — *Books noticed in this column will be sent to any address, post-paid, on receipt of price. Send orders to* UNITARIAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL SOCIETY, *7 Tremont Place, Boston, Mass.*

THE publishers have piled our "Table" so high this month with good books, all of which are suitable for holiday gifts as well as for the Sunday-school Library, that we can only give a list of their titles, deferring further notice to future numbers of our paper.

CLASS A.

Books for Youngest Pupils.

LULU'S LIBRARY. By Louisa M. Alcott. Twelve new stories. Boston: Roberts Brothers. pp. 269. Price, $1.00.

OUR CHILDREN'S SONGS. With Illustrations. 8vo. Ornamental cloth. New York: Harper & Brothers. pp. 203. Price, $1.00.

CLASS B.

Books for Intermediate Pupils.

ITALIAN POPULAR TALES. By Thomas Frederic Crane. (Fairy Tales, Nursery Tales, Legends, Stories, etc.) Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co. pp. 386. Price, $2.50.

FRIENDS AND FOES FROM FAIRY LANDS. By the Right-Hon. Lord Brabourne. With numerous illustrations. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co. pp. 367. Price, $1.50.

NATURE'S TEACHINGS. Human Invention anticipated by Nature. By Rev. J. G. Wood. With over 750 illustrations. Boston: Roberts Brothers. pp. 526. Price, $3.00.

BIRD WAYS. By Olive Thorne Miller. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co. pp. 223. Price, $1.25.

RICO AND WISELI. RICO AND STINELI, AND HOW RICO FOUND A HOME. Translated from the German of Johanna Spyri (author of "Heidi"), by Louise Brooks. Boston: Cupples, Upham, & Co. pp. 509. Price, $1.50.

HARPERS' YOUNG PEOPLE FOR 1885. Over 800 pages, with more than 700 illustrations. 4to. Ornamental cloth. New York: Harper & Brothers. Price, $3.50.

CLASS C.

Books for Teachers and members of Adult Classes.

A BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE. THE STAIRCASE TO THE OLD FAITH, THE OPEN DOOR TO THE NEW. By Rev. Samuel J. Barrows (editor of the "Christian Register"). Boston: American Unitarian Association. pp. 221. Price, 75 cts.

THE IDEA OF GOD AS AFFECTED BY MODERN KNOWLEDGE. By John Fiske. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co. pp. 173. Price, $1.00.

THE THOUGHT OF GOD IN HYMNS AND POEMS. By Frederic L. Hosmer and William C. Gannett. Boston: Roberts Brothers. Paper covers. pp. 132. Price, 50 cents.

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